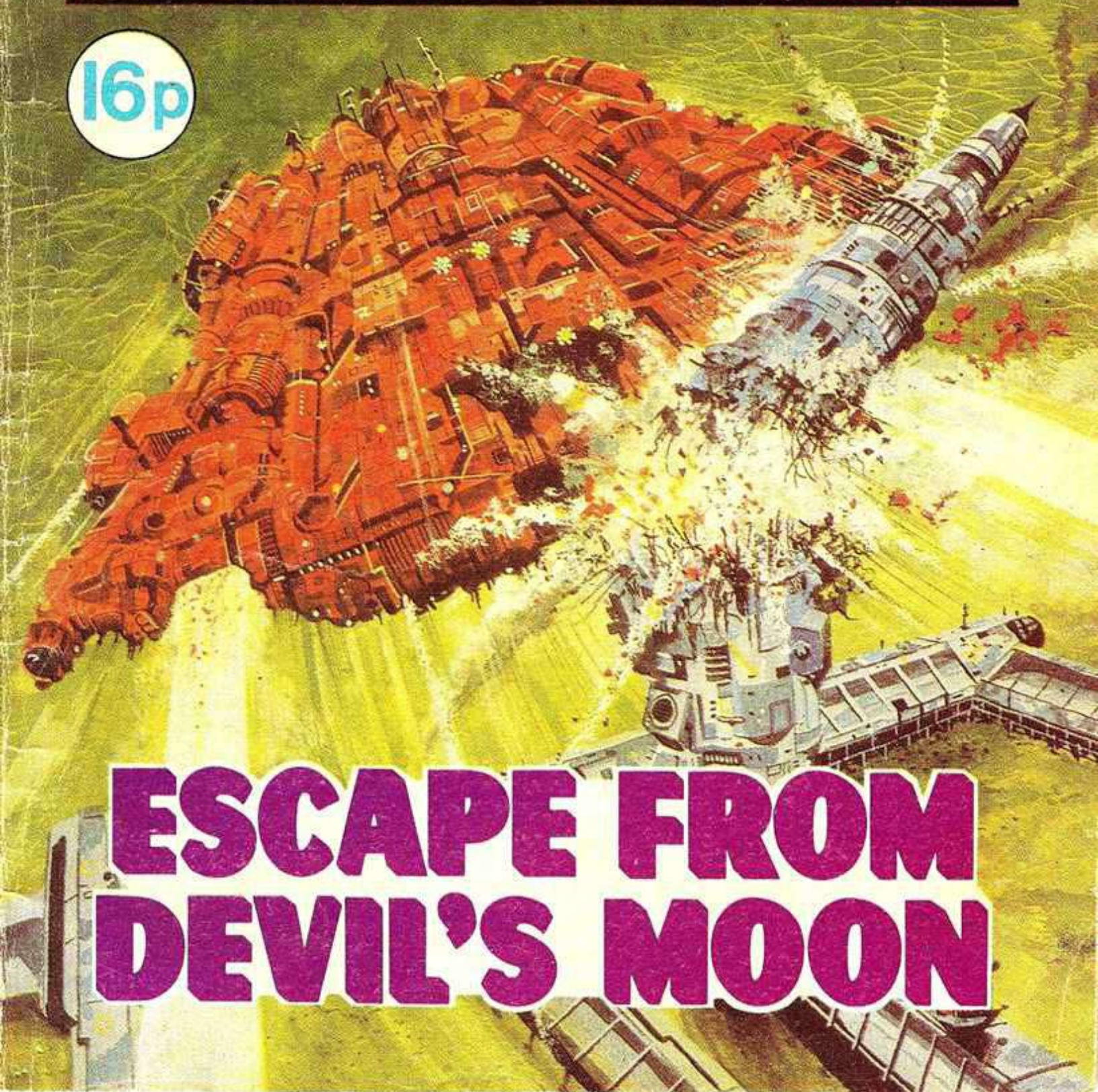


STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 61

16p



ESCAPE FROM DEVIL'S MOON

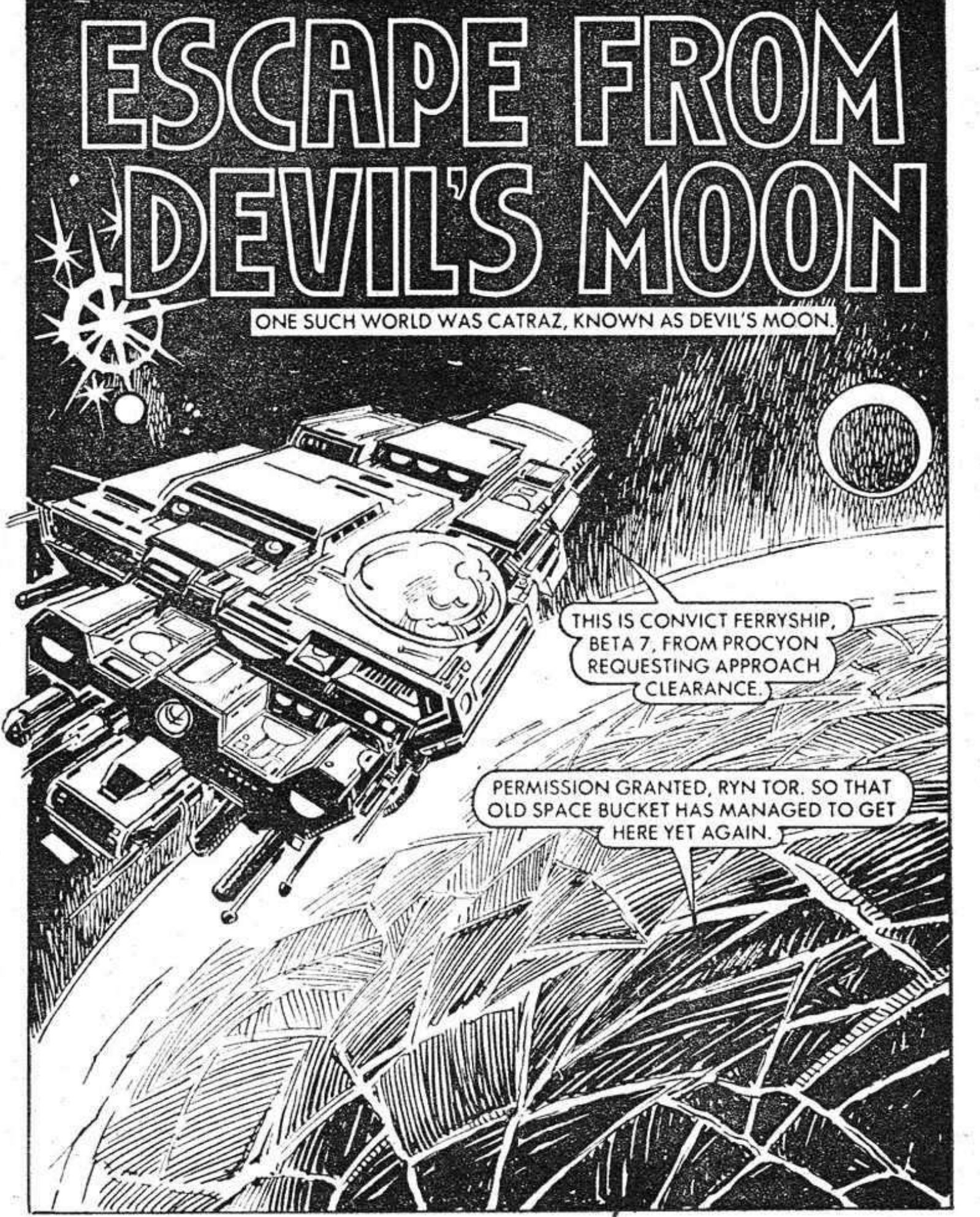
STARBLAZER



TERRAN
FEDERATION
STRETCHED OUT INTO THE
UNEXPLORED DEPTHS OF SPACE
TO FIND SPECIAL PLANETS —
PLANETS WITH A DOUBLE PURPOSE.
THEY HAD TO CONTAIN THE ORES
NEEDED TO MANUFACTURE THE MANY
FUEL PELLETS USED TO POWER SPACE
VESSELS. THEY HAD ALSO TO BE HOME
FOR THOUSANDS OF LONG TERM
CONVICTS WHO SERVED THEIR
SENTENCES ON THESE SPACIAL
ISLANDS.

ESCAPE FROM DEVIL'S MOON

ONE SUCH WORLD WAS CATRAZ, KNOWN AS DEVIL'S MOON.



THIS IS CONVICT FERRYSHIP,
BETA 7, FROM PROCYON
REQUESTING APPROACH
CLEARANCE.

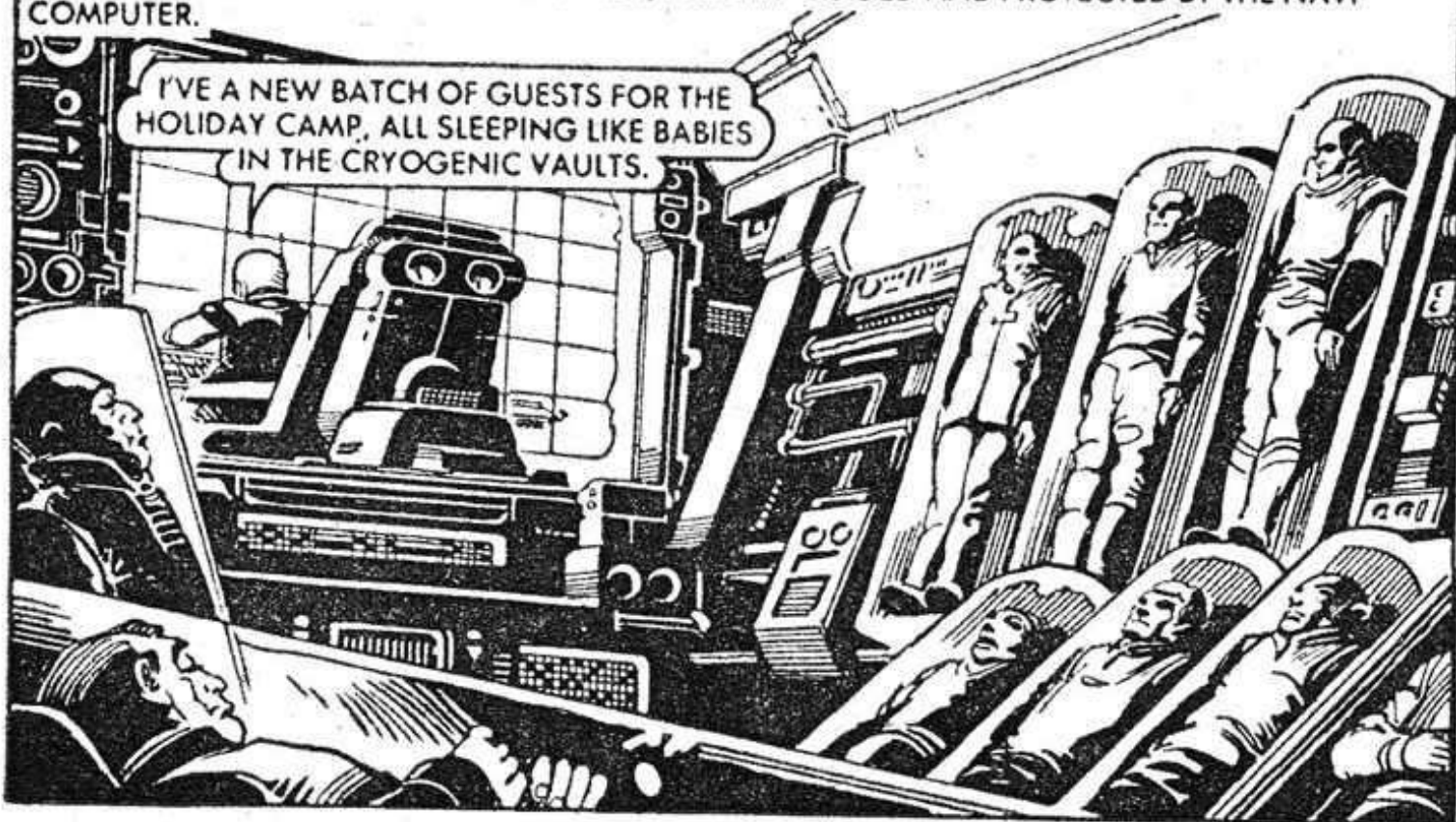
PERMISSION GRANTED, RYN TOR. SO THAT
OLD SPACE BUCKET HAS MANAGED TO GET
HERE YET AGAIN.

ONLY JUST, CATRAZ CONTROL. HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCING PROBLEMS WITH THE GYRO-STABILISERS. I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOUR TECHNICIANS TOOK A LOOK AT HER BEFORE THE RETURN JOURNEY.



FLIGHTS THROUGH HYPERSPACE TOOK TEDIOUS MONTHS — BUT FOR THE PASSENGERS IT SEEMED JUST A BRIEF SLEEP IN THE CRYOGENIC UNITS. DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE VOYAGE EVEN THE PILOT COULD SLUMBER, THE SHIP GUIDED AND PROTECTED BY THE NAVI-COMPUTER.

I'VE A NEW BATCH OF GUESTS FOR THE HOLIDAY CAMP, ALL SLEEPING LIKE BABIES IN THE CRYOGENIC VAULTS.



AS TOR EASED THE SHIP TOWARDS THE LANDING PADS—

I'VE A ROW OF RED ALERT LIGHTS,
CONTROL. IT'S THOSE GYROS AGAIN! I'M
ABORTING THE LANDING.



IT'S A MAJOR SYSTEMS
FAILURE. THE OLD GIRL IS
PACKING UP ON ME.

TOR FOUGHT TO KEEP THE SHIP UNDER CONTROL, BUT STRUCK THE CONTROL TOWER.

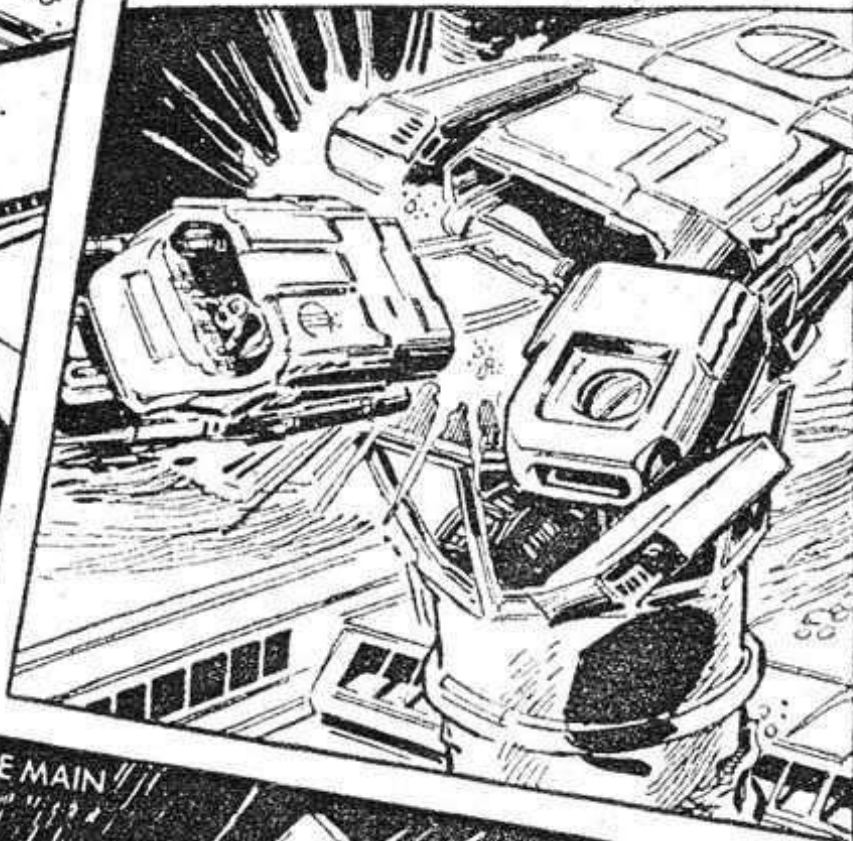
BY THE MOONS OF ...
SHE'S BREAKING UP!



TOR'S FINGER STABBED THE EJECTOR BUTTON.



SECONDS LATER DEATH RAINED DOWN UPON THE PENAL COLONY AS TOR GOT SAFELY AWAY IN THE ESCAPE POD.



THE ENGINE SECTION PLUNGED PAST THE MAIN BASE, AND INTO THE NUCLEAR SILOS.





TOR LANDED AND MADE FOR THE NEAREST DOME.

THERE'S JUST A CHANCE SOMEONE MAY STILL BE ALIVE DOWN BELOW. BUT ONCE THOSE ATOMIC VOLCANOES BLOW...



TOR PENETRATED THE LOWER LEVELS AS FAR AS HE DARED.

POOR DEVILS. THOSE WHO SURVIVED
THE IMPACT WERE SOON KILLED BY
METHANE. TREMORS! I'M RUNNING
OUT OF TIME!



BUT AS HE MOVED TO RETURN TO HIS CRAFT —

IF THERE'S SOMEONE THERE — HELP
US. THE DOOR CAN ONLY BE
OPENED FROM THAT SIDE.

SURVIVORS!



WARNING THE MEN TO HOLD THEIR BREATH, TOR OPERATED THE LOCK ON THE MASSIVE DOOR.

TAKE THESE MASKS—AND RUN.



THE GROUND TEMBLED VIOLENTLY AS THEY HEADED FOR THE SURFACE.

A BOILING, RADIOACTIVE BALL RUSHED ACROSS THE GROUND TOWARDS THEM.

THESE MEN ARE THE DREGS OF THE GALAXY, BUT THEY ARE STILL HUMAN BEINGS. GOOD GRIEF—WHAT'S THAT?



THIS WHOLE AREA WILL BE ENGULFED IN MINUTES—AND THAT INCLUDES US!



TOR AND THE CRIMINALS REACHED THE ESCAPE CRAFT.



THAT WAS
TOO CLOSE!



THE CRAFT CLIMBED SWIFTLY—

THE DOMES—THE COLONY—ENGULFED!





GRIEF! THE WHOLE PLANET! GONE!
WHAT...?

GOOD RIDDANCE AS FAR AS
I'M CONCERNED, FRIEND.



I PLAN TO FIND A NICE QUIET PLACE.
YOU TAKE US THERE.

I'M ALIVE ONLY BECAUSE HE REALISES
HE NEEDS ME TO PILOT THE SHIP.



MILLISECONDS LATER THE PRIMARY BOOSTERS THRUST THE CRAFT TO 0.9 OF LIGHT SPEED.



SEALING HIS HELMET, TOR PRESSED
THE CRYOGENIC GAS RELEASE
BUTTON.

YOU ... C... CAN'T ...

CLIK!

SLEEP WELL! SOON YOU'LL BE TRUSSED UP
AND PROCYON BOUND.

THE GIANT CRIMINAL MANAGED TO PUSH TOR FROM HIS SEAT.

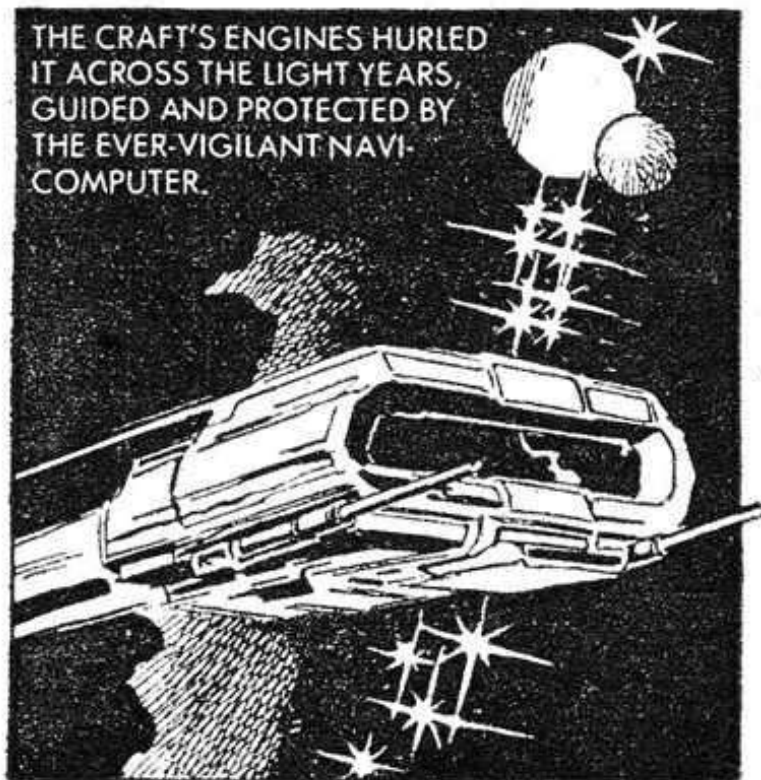
MY HELMET.



AT LIGHT SPEED THE CRAFT WITH ITS SLUMBERING PASSENGERS SPED AWAY FROM THE WIDENING SPHERE OF DEBRIS THAT WAS ONCE CATRAZ.



THE CRAFT'S ENGINES HURLED IT ACROSS THE LIGHT YEARS, GUIDED AND PROTECTED BY THE EVER-VIGILANT NAVI-COMPUTER.



UNTIL, IN A SYSTEM ON THE RIM OF THE GALAXY MANY UNITS LATER—



TOR WAS THE FIRST TO COME ROUND.



WE'VE BEEN IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION FOR MONTHS. MUST HAVE BLASTED CLEAR ACROSS THE GALAXY. THE 'PUTER ONLY OVER-RODE THE CRYOGENIC CIRCUITS BECAUSE IT NEEDED INSTRUCTIONS.



WE'RE HOMING IN ON A BEACON. WE'RE LOW ON POWER BUT WE CAN MAKE IT. NOW TO SORT OUT ANOTHER PROBLEM.

MY HEAD... WHERE AM I?



WE'RE LIGHT YEARS AWAY FROM KNOWN SPACE. WELL CLEAR OF THE SPACE LANES. YOU GOT YOUR WAY AFTER ALL, KALIK.

SO IT SEEMS, SPACER. THERE IS NO QUARREL BETWEEN US NOW. I RECKON I CAN LET YOU LIVE.

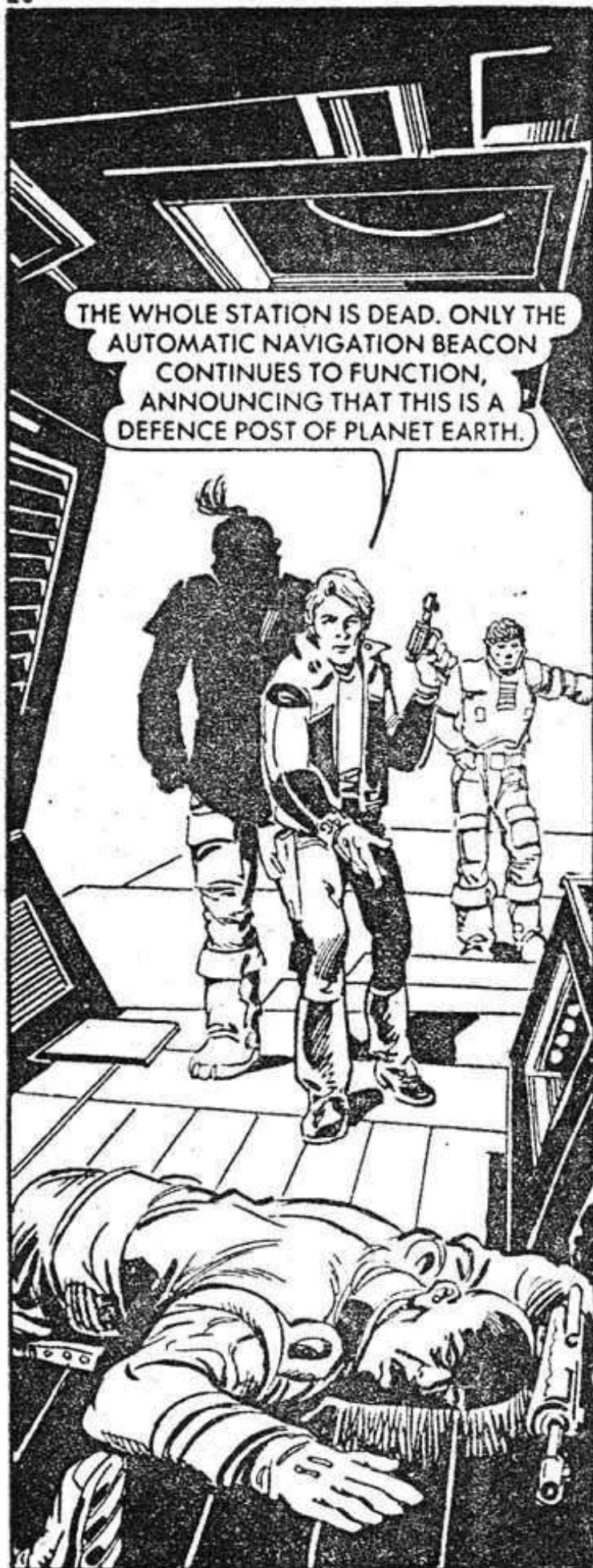
THEY APPROACHED THE SOURCE OF THE SIGNAL.

A WAY STATION. I'M TRYING TO
RAISE THEM BUT ALL I GET IS STATIC.

IT DOESN'T
LOOK RIGHT, TOR.

TOR DOCKED HIS CRAFT—

THIS IS A DEFENCE POST ... WE SHOULD
HAVE BEEN CHALLENGED.



THEY EXPLORED THE LIFELESS HULK—

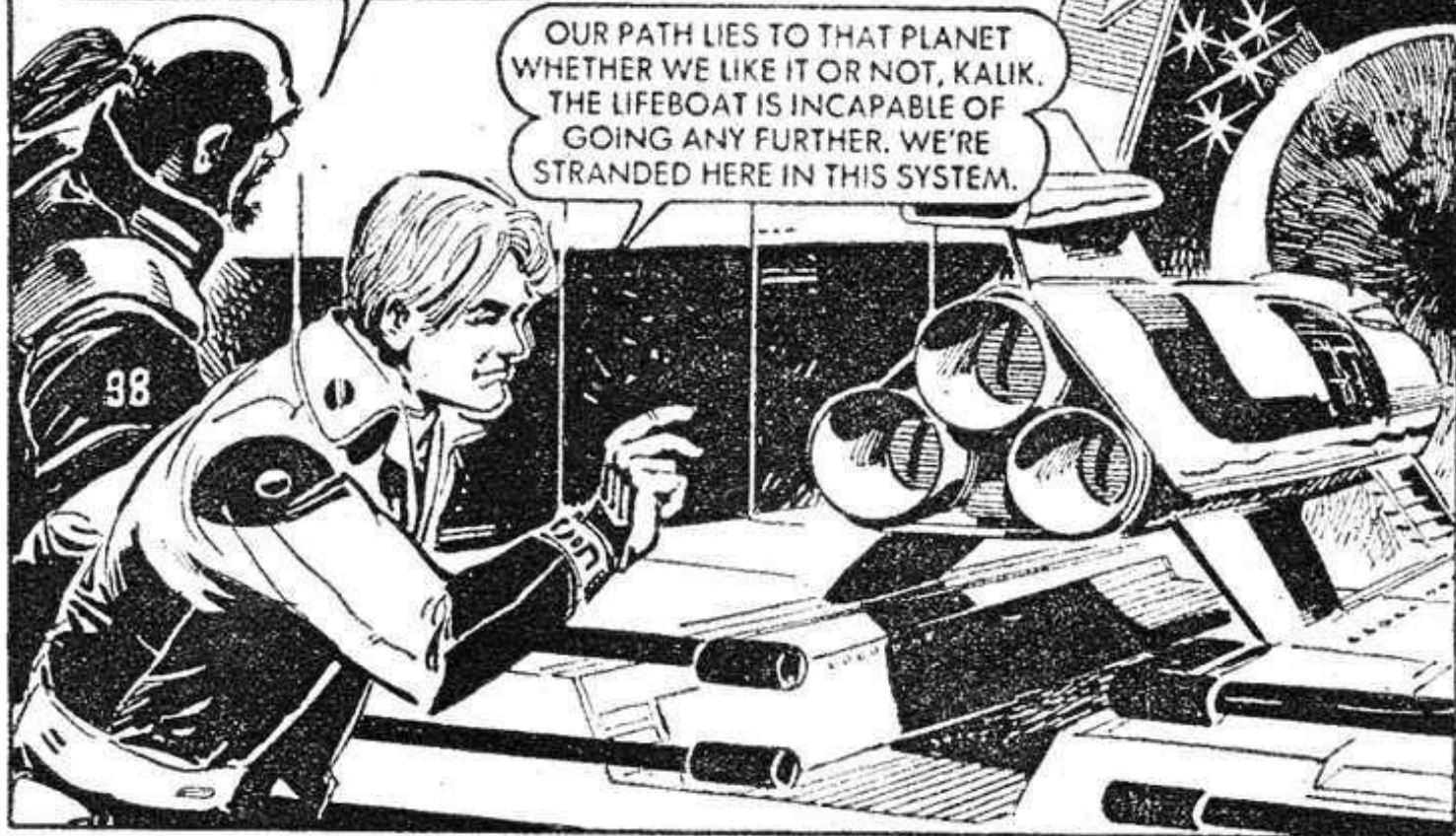
THIS WAS NO ACCIDENT. THOSE MEN HAVE LASER BURNS. THE STATION WAS ATTACKED. BUT BY WHOM?



THEY LOCATED THE SHUTTLE BAY, AND FOUND A VEHICLE STILL OPERATIONAL.

PERHAPS THE ANSWERS ARE DOWN THERE, TOR, ON PLANET EARTH.

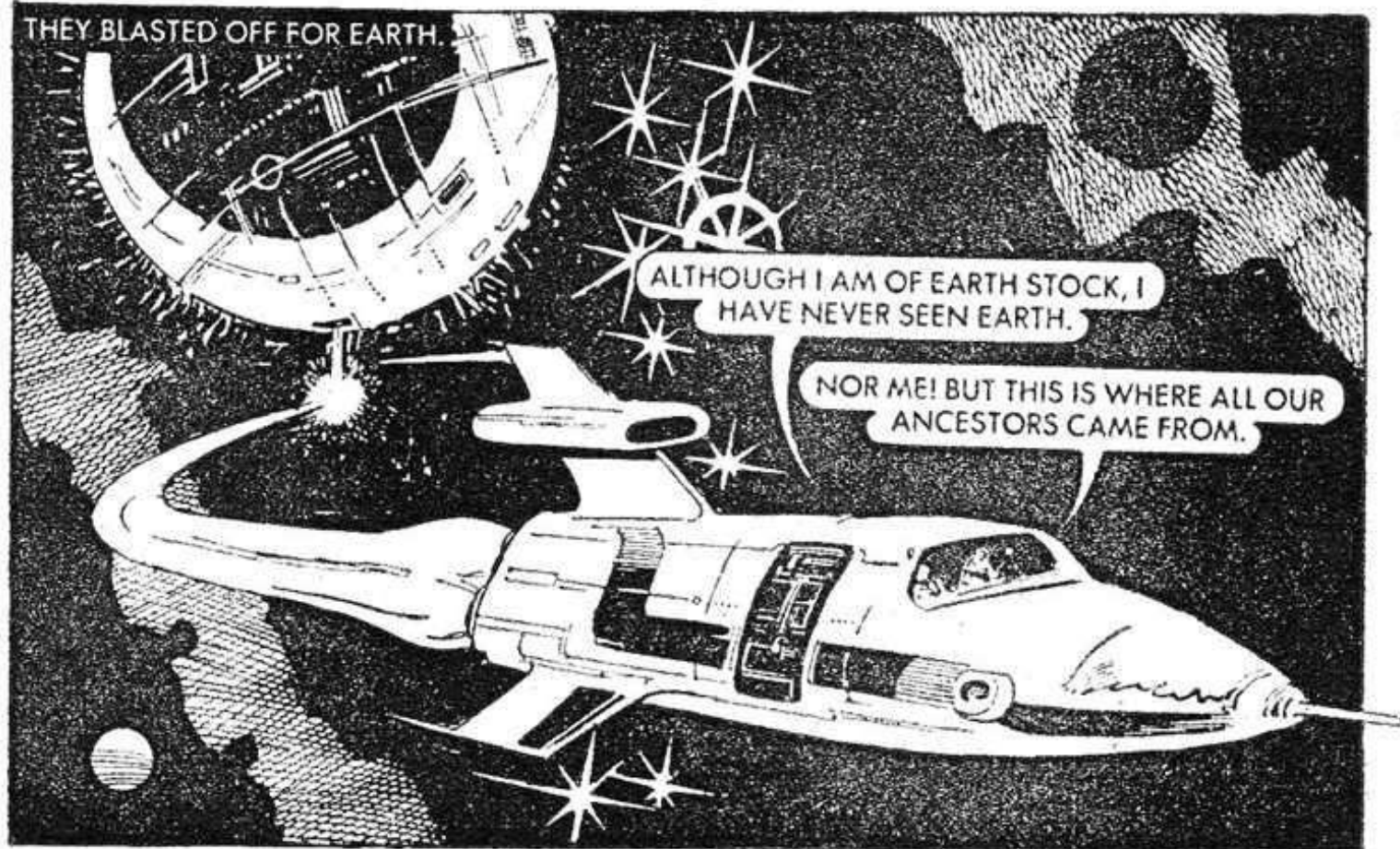
OUR PATH LIES TO THAT PLANET WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT, KALIK. THE LIFEBOAT IS INCAPABLE OF GOING ANY FURTHER. WE'RE STRANDED HERE IN THIS SYSTEM.



THEY BLASTED OFF FOR EARTH.

ALTHOUGH I AM OF EARTH STOCK, I HAVE NEVER SEEN EARTH.

NOR ME! BUT THIS IS WHERE ALL OUR ANCESTORS CAME FROM.



I'VE TRIED EVERY POSSIBLE
FREQUENCY—THE AIRWAVES
ARE DEAD! THERE SHOULD BE
SOMETHING.



WHAT THE ... ?

A DESPERATE ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO PUT OUT THE FIRE—



THAT WAS A PULSE BEAM THAT HIT
US! THEY'RE DESIGNED TO BRING
DOWN LOW FLYING CRAFT.

THE CRIPPLED SHUTTLE SWEEP LOW OVER A DERELICT CITY

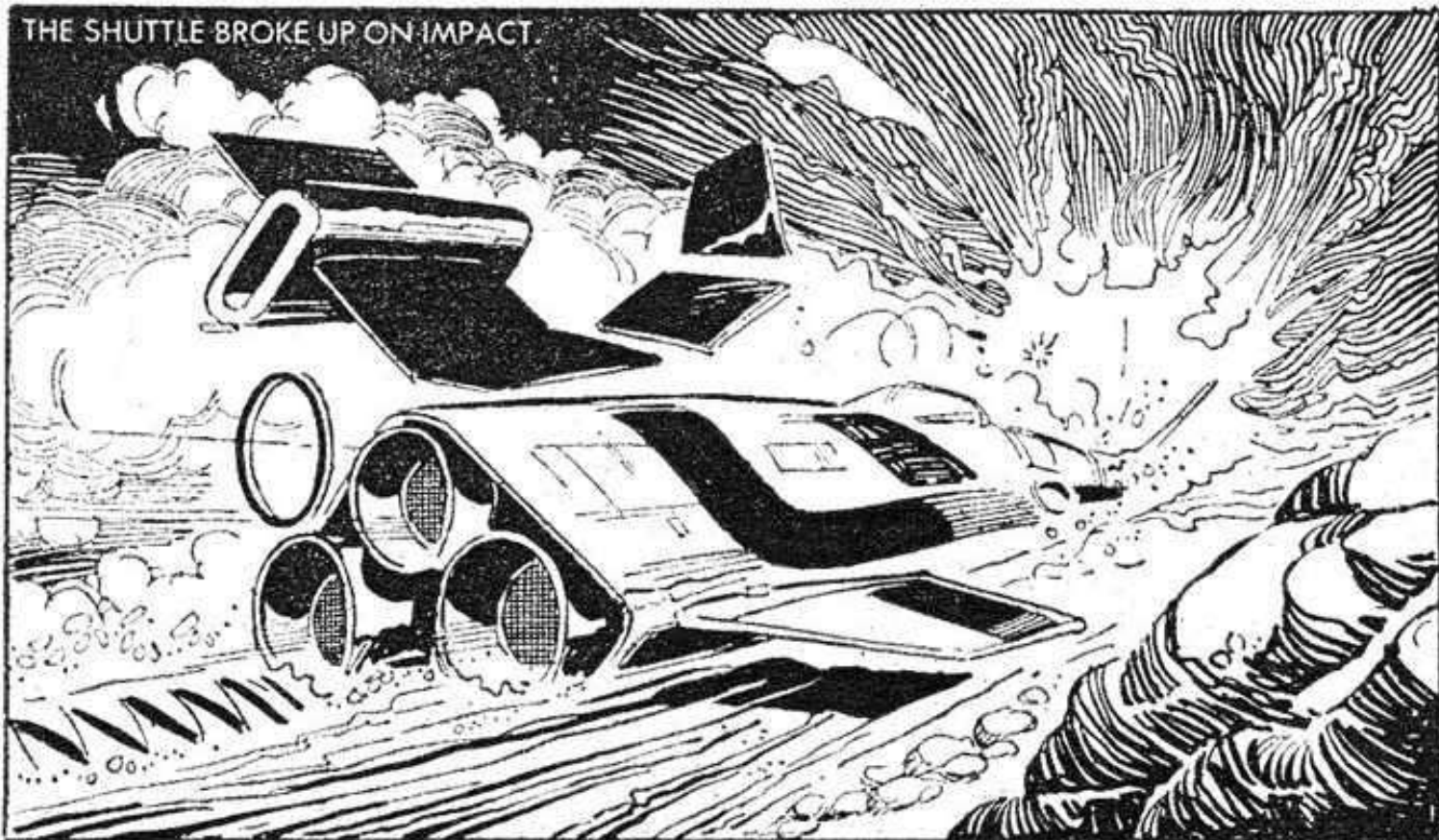
GET YOUR NOSE UP,
BABY. GET IT UP!

LOOK TOR. A CITY!
BUT IT'S COMPLETELY DERELICT.





THE SHUTTLE BROKE UP ON IMPACT.



THE CRAFT CAME TO A GRINDING HALT.

BY SOME MIRACLE WE'RE
DOWN IN ONE PIECE.

QUICK, GET CLEAR.
SHE'S GOING TO BLOW.

EMERGENCY
SUPPLIES

THE SHUTTLE ERUPTED IN A BALL OF WHITE FLAME.

EMERGENCY
SUPPLIES





SOON THEY WERE AT THE FOOT OF THE MYSTERIOUS STRUCTURE.

THERE'S NO SIGN OF AN ENTRANCE.
WHAT IN THE COSMOS IS IT?



IT'S OUT OF PLACE HERE, TOR. LOOK AT THE
WAY IT CREATES SUCH TURBULENCE IN THE
AIR ABOVE IT. IT'S WEIRD!

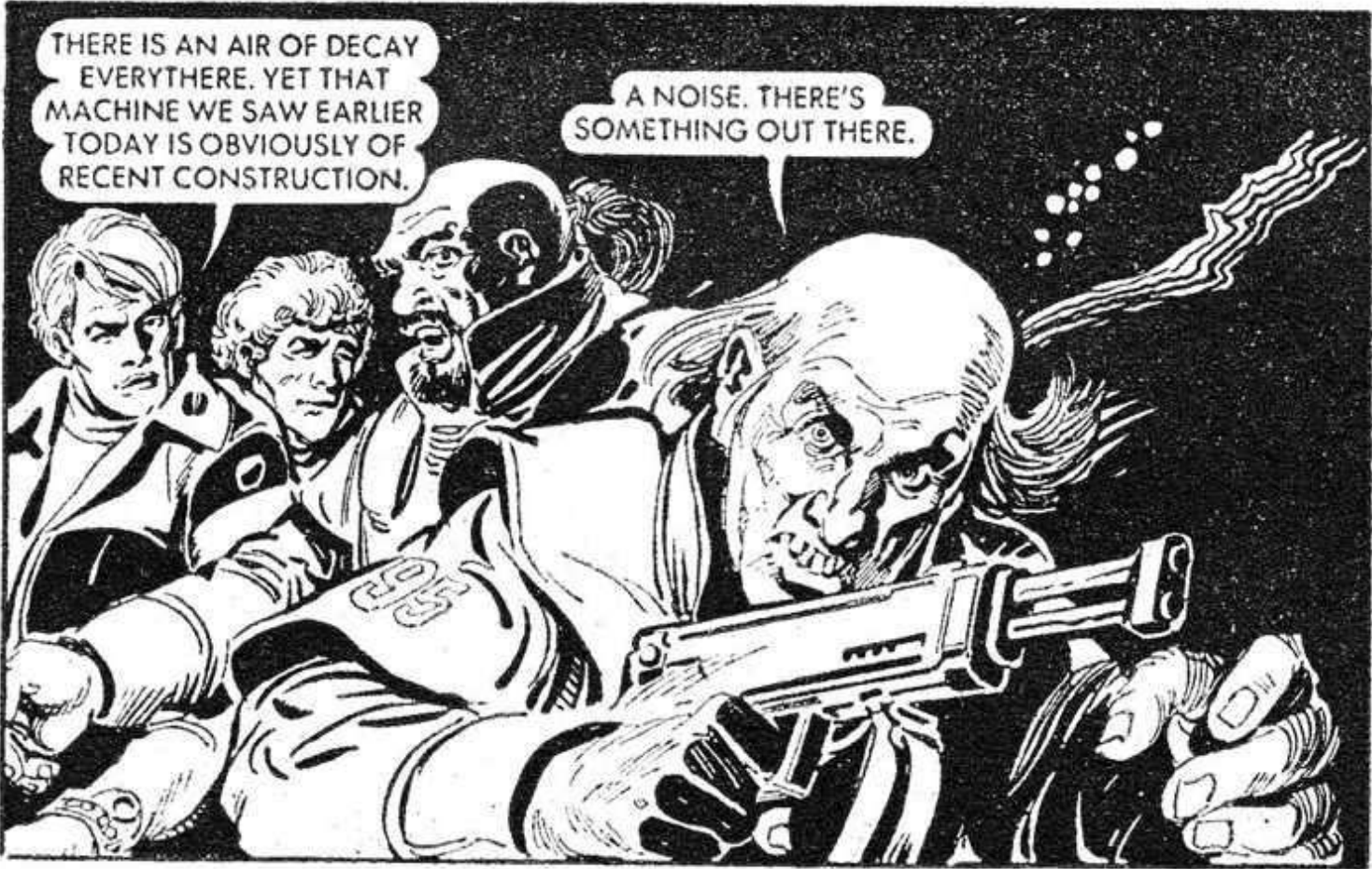
YOU'RE RIGHT, KALIK. THIS
WASN'T BUILT BY HUMAN HANDS.







THERE'S SOMETHING
EVIL ABOUT THIS PLACE.



THERE IS AN AIR OF DECAY
EVERYWHERE. YET THAT
MACHINE WE SAW EARLIER
TODAY IS OBVIOUSLY OF
RECENT CONSTRUCTION.

A NOISE. THERE'S
SOMETHING OUT THERE.





ALL NIGHT THEY FOUGHT AN UNSEEN ENEMY—

THAT WAS THE LONGEST NIGHT OF MY LIFE. MY
LASER IS ALMOST DISCHARGED. MUCH LONGER
AND ...

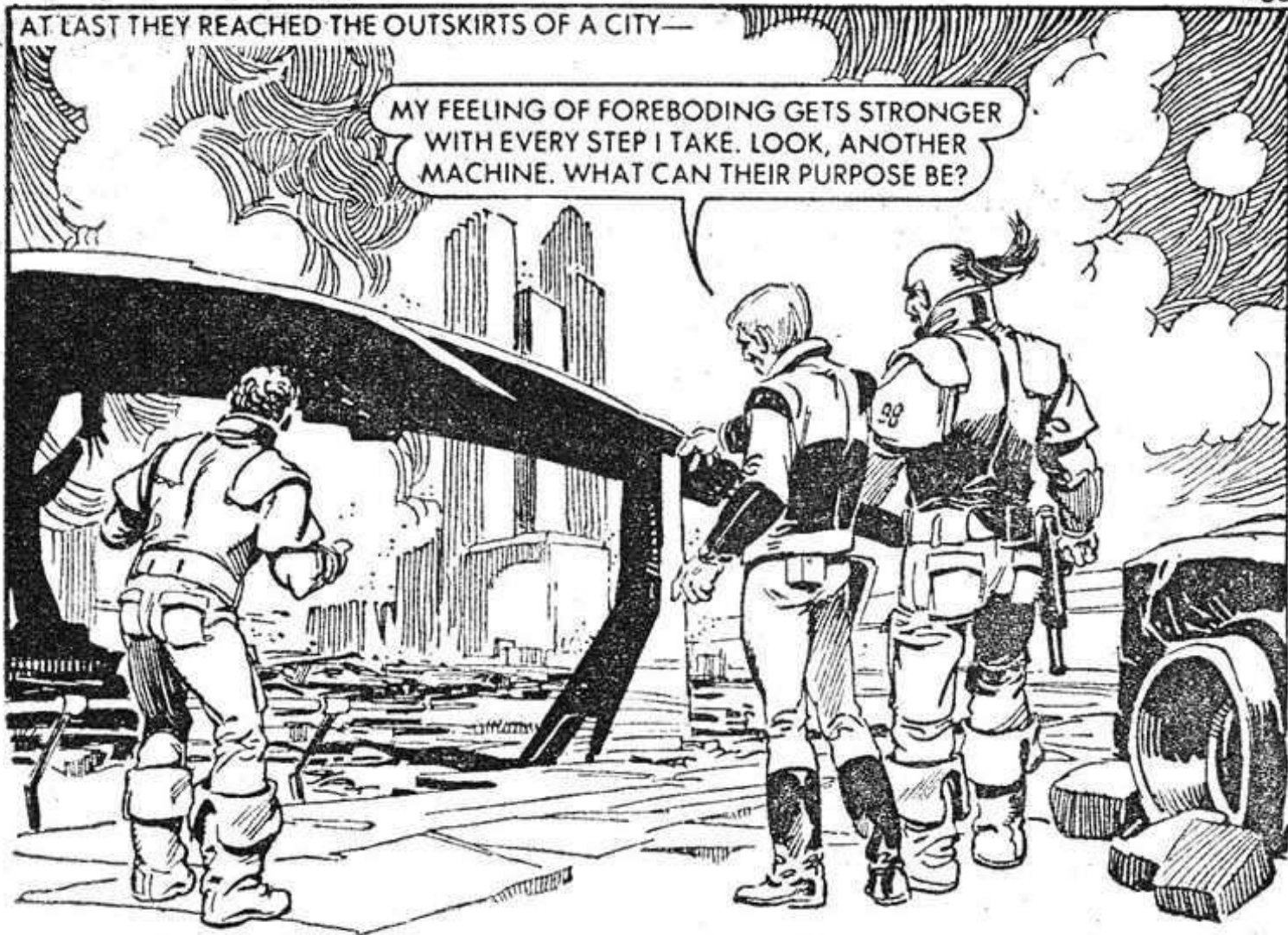
SOLTRON HAS FOUND
SOMETHING. QUICK.





AT LAST THEY REACHED THE OUTSKIRTS OF A CITY—

MY FEELING OF FOREBODING GETS STRONGER
WITH EVERY STEP I TAKE. LOOK, ANOTHER
MACHINE. WHAT CAN THEIR PURPOSE BE?



WHAT DID THIS?

MAYBE THERE WAS A WAR OR A
PLAGUE THAT WIPED THEM ALL OUT.





SUDDENLY, A BRIGHT LIGHT
FLASHED ACROSS THEM.

WHAT THE ... ! IT'S NOT A
LASER. SOMETHING IS
REFLECTING THE LIGHT OF THE
SETTING SUN. THE FLASHES
AREN'T RANDOM EITHER.



THEY'RE SPELLING OUT
A TERRAN MAYDAY! COME ON!



BUT THE ODDS WERE TOO GREAT —



TOO... MANY...







SECONDS LATER THEY WERE INSIDE A DERELICT BUILDING.



THEY CLIMBED ENDLESS FLIGHTS, UNTIL.



THE MAN LET DOWN A ROPE LADDER.





STOBOR EXPLAINED THE SITUATION.

I ARRIVED HERE IN '82 FROM TERRAN COLONY AREXAL WHERE I WAS BORN. I WAS FORCED DOWN BY ALIENS.





THEY CRUSHED ALL
RESISTANCE WITHOUT MERCY.




WHAT SPACEFIGHTERS COULD BE
LAUNCHED WERE BLASTED OUT OF
THE SKY. THE ORIONUS TERRAFORM
SHIP ORBITED BATHING THE
ATMOSPHERE WITH VAST AMOUNTS
OF DEADLY RADIATION. THE
SURVIVORS TOOK SHELTER IN THE
RADIATION SHELTERS.



WE REMAINED THERE FOR
TWO YEARS BEFORE IT WAS
SAFE ENOUGH TO RETURN
TO THE SURFACE. THOSE
HUMANS WHO COULDN'T
FIND SHELTER WERE
MUTATED BY THE
RADIATION.








THEN WHY STRUGGLE HERE WHEN
A SLOW DEATH BY POISONING
AWAITS YOU?

ALL MY HOPES LIE IN WHAT
AWAITS AT THE OTHER END OF
THIS ROPE.

THEY FOLLOWED STOBOR
DOWN THE ROPE.



THE MUTANTS CANNOT
PENETRATE THIS BASEMENT.
THE VEHICLE NEEDS REPAIR.
I CANNOT DO IT.

IF IT ISN'T MAJOR, I CAN FIX
IT. BUT WHAT'S THE POINT...
NO PLACE ON EARTH WILL
ESCAPE THE AMMONIA!



WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO HOPE FOR? I ESTIMATE THAT BY THE END OF THE YEAR THE MACHINES WILL HAVE STOPPED — THEIR WORK IS FINISHED. I'M NOT THE KIND TO SIT AND WAIT FOR DEATH.

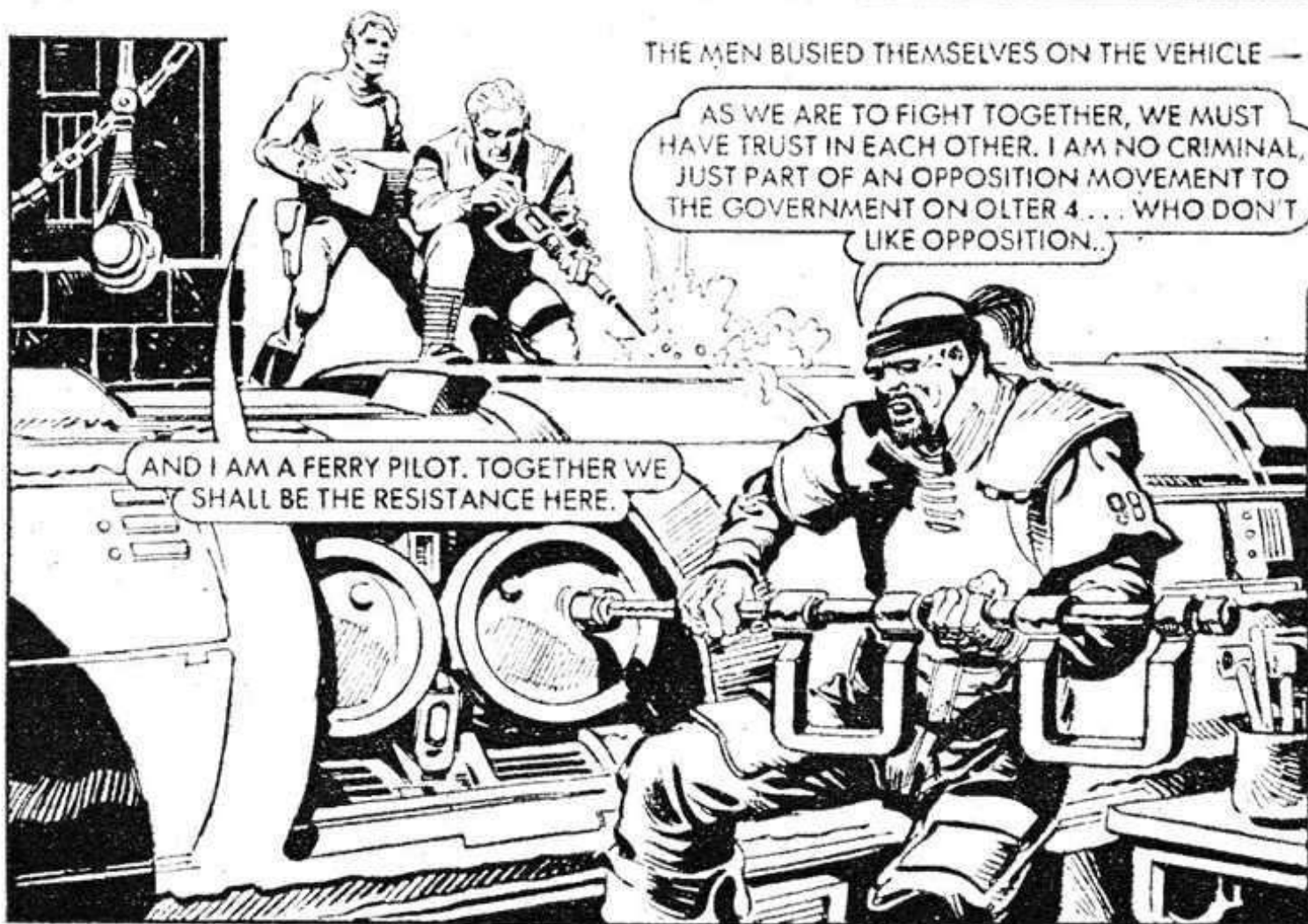


NOR AM I, STOBOR. SHOW ME WHAT MUST BE DONE.

THE MEN BUSIED THEMSELVES ON THE VEHICLE —

AS WE ARE TO FIGHT TOGETHER, WE MUST HAVE TRUST IN EACH OTHER. I AM NO CRIMINAL, JUST PART OF AN OPPOSITION MOVEMENT TO THE GOVERNMENT ON OLTER 4... WHO DON'T LIKE OPPOSITION..

AND I AM A FERRY PILOT. TOGETHER WE SHALL BE THE RESISTANCE HERE.



FINALLY THE MUTANTS GREW BOLD.



MEETING NO RESISTANCE, THE MUTANTS SWARMED INTO THE PENTHOUSE DESTROYING EVERYTHING.



THE NOISE REACHED EARS BELOW.

GREAT GALAXIES. THEY'VE
PENETRATED YOUR
FORTRESS, STOBOR. WE'VE
JUST RUN OUT OF TIME.

THEN WE MOVE NOW.
READY OR NOT.

THE ENGINE FIRED FIRST TIME —

THE MUTIES
ARE BREAKING IN!





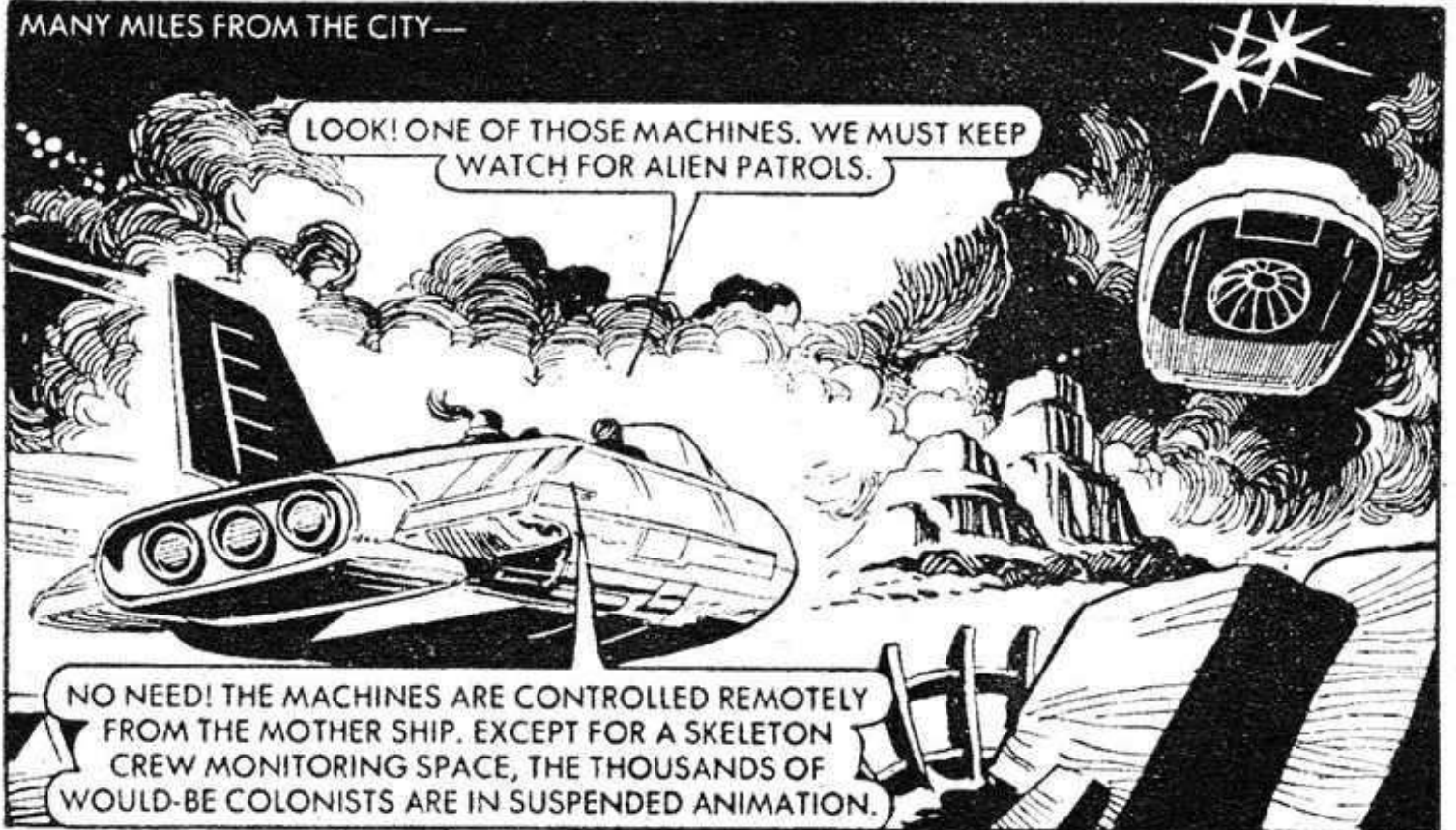
THE MUTANTS ATTACKED WITH SAVAGE FURY.



THEY SMASHED THEIR WAY THROUGH THE MUTANTS.



MANY MILES FROM THE CITY—



SO THEY SLEEP, BIDDING THEIR TIME,
WHILST EARTH IS CHANGED TO
SUIT THEM.



LATE THE NEXT DAY—

CAN YOU TASTE THE BITTERNESS IN
THE AIR HERE, KALIK? THE AMMONIA
IS BEGINNING TO MAKE ITSELF FELT.



THE VEHICLE WAS LASHED BY A VIOLENT STORM.

EVEN THE RAIN TASTES FOUL. WHAT THE...? YOU'RE STOPPING, STOBOR!

I'VE GOT NO CHOICE, OTHERWISE WE RISK LOSING THE ROAD IN THIS DOWNPOUR.

DANGER LURKED IN THE DARKNESS—





A SIXTH SENSE MADE HIM TURN.





TOR BLASTED THE MUD TO LIQUID WITH HIS PHASER.

THAT'S A TEMPORARY GAP...
WE'LL GET FREE NOW.

JUST AS WELL, SPACER. THIS PLACE
ISN'T TOO HEALTHY.



THE VEHICLE LURCHED FREE.

BY THE PLANETS,
WE DID IT!



BUT AT FIRST LIGHT DISASTER STRUCK.



SHE'S DONE FOR.

SO WE ARE OUT IN THE OPEN ON
FOOT. WHEN NIGHT FALLS...

IT MAY NOT COME TO THAT, MY
FRIENDS. UNLESS MY MEMORY
MISLEADS ME, WE ARE NEAR OUR
DESTINATION.

THEY TRUDGED AFTER STOBOR ACROSS
THE WILD TERRAIN.



WE'VE ARRIVED.

B... BUT. I DON'T
UNDERSTAND. WHERE?

FROM MAPS I WORKED OUT
POSSIBLE SPACECRAFT SITES IN
THE AREA. THIS IS AN
UNDERGROUND HANGAR.



STOBOR LED THEM INSIDE THE ROCK FISSURE.



AT THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT STOBOR KEYED IN A SEQUENCE . . .

YOU DID IT, STOBOR.
BUT, HOW?

ALL COMPUTERS WERE PROGRAMMED BY
PEOPLE . . . MOST OF WHOM I KNEW THROUGH
MY JOB AS A COMPUTER TECHNICIAN. I
RECOGNISED THE PROGRAMMER'S STYLE.

STOBOR LED THEM TO A HANGAR —

SOMEONE ELSE HAD THE SAME IDEA.

THEY ALMOST MADE IT TOO, BUT THE
RADIATION GOT TO THEM FIRST. POOR
DEVILS.



THE SYSTEMS WERE STILL INTACT AND THE CRAFT WAS ACTIVATED.



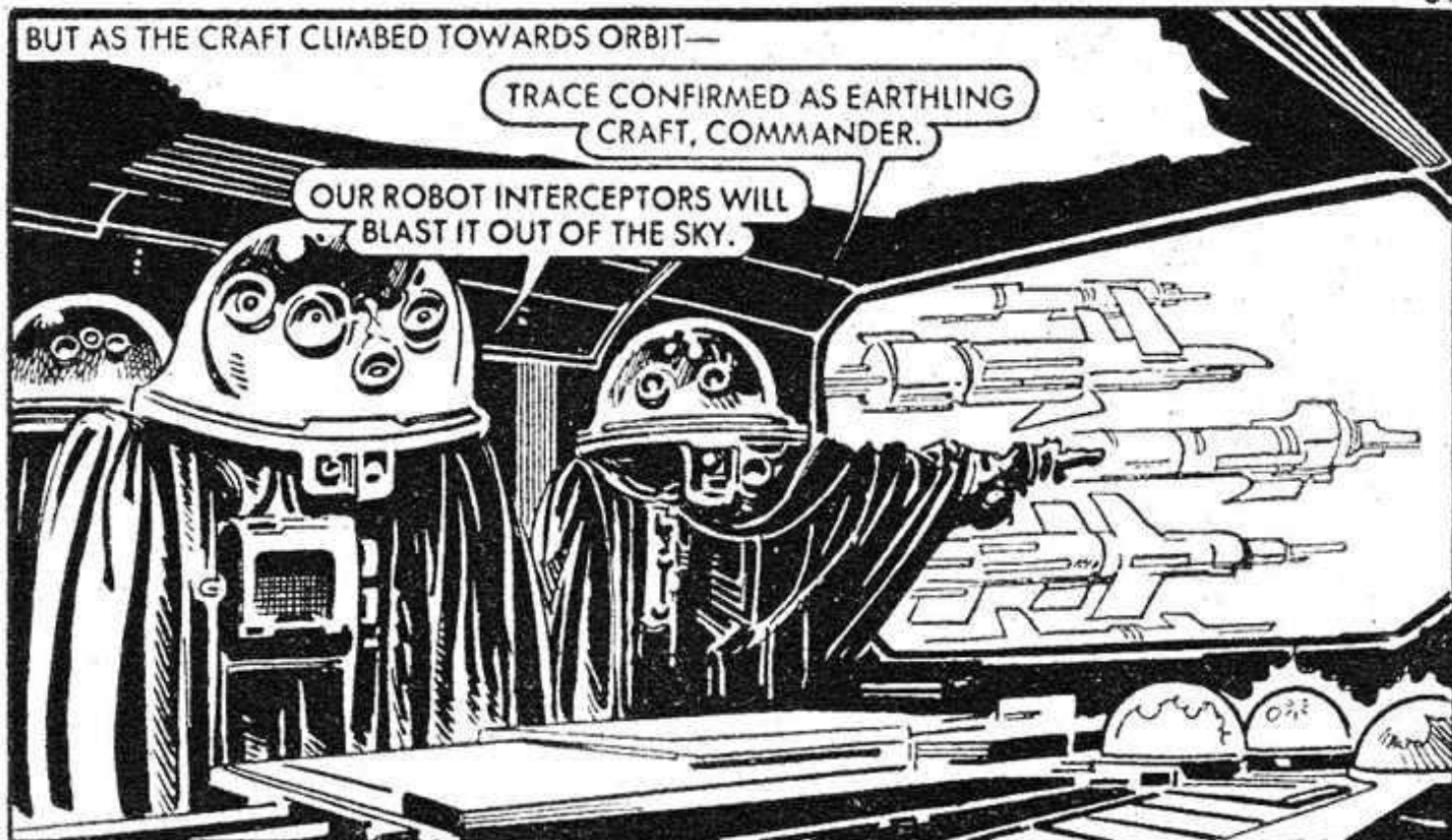
MY DREAM OF SURVIVAL HAS BECOME A REALITY,
TOR.



BUT AS THE CRAFT CLIMBED TOWARDS ORBIT—

TRACE CONFIRMED AS EARTHLING
CRAFT, COMMANDER.

OUR ROBOT INTERCEPTORS WILL
BLAST IT OUT OF THE SKY.



ALIEN FIGHTERS!

WE'RE NOT LOST YET, KALIK.



THE ALIEN PACK HOMED IN FOR THE KILL.

FIRST THE WEAPONRY SYSTEMS. FIRE!





KALIK AND STOBOR MADE FOR THE ESCAPE MODULE—

THIS SHIP WILL EXPLODE WITH
INCREDIBLE FORCE. I CAN TAKE
THEM AS WELL!



MOMENTS LATER THE ESCAPE MODULE BLASTED CLEAR.

WE'VE GOT TO GET AS FAR AWAY AS
POSSIBLE. HEAD TOWARDS THE SEA.



ALIEN EYES WATCHED THE STRICKEN EARTHSHIP.


FOLLOW THAT CRAFT DOWN—
ENSURE ITS DESTRUCTION.



MOMENTS LATER—

SHE'S HIT THE SURFACE!
WHAT AN EXPLOSION! BUT
IT MISSED THE ALIEN SHIP BY MILES.
WHAT WENT WRONG TOR?

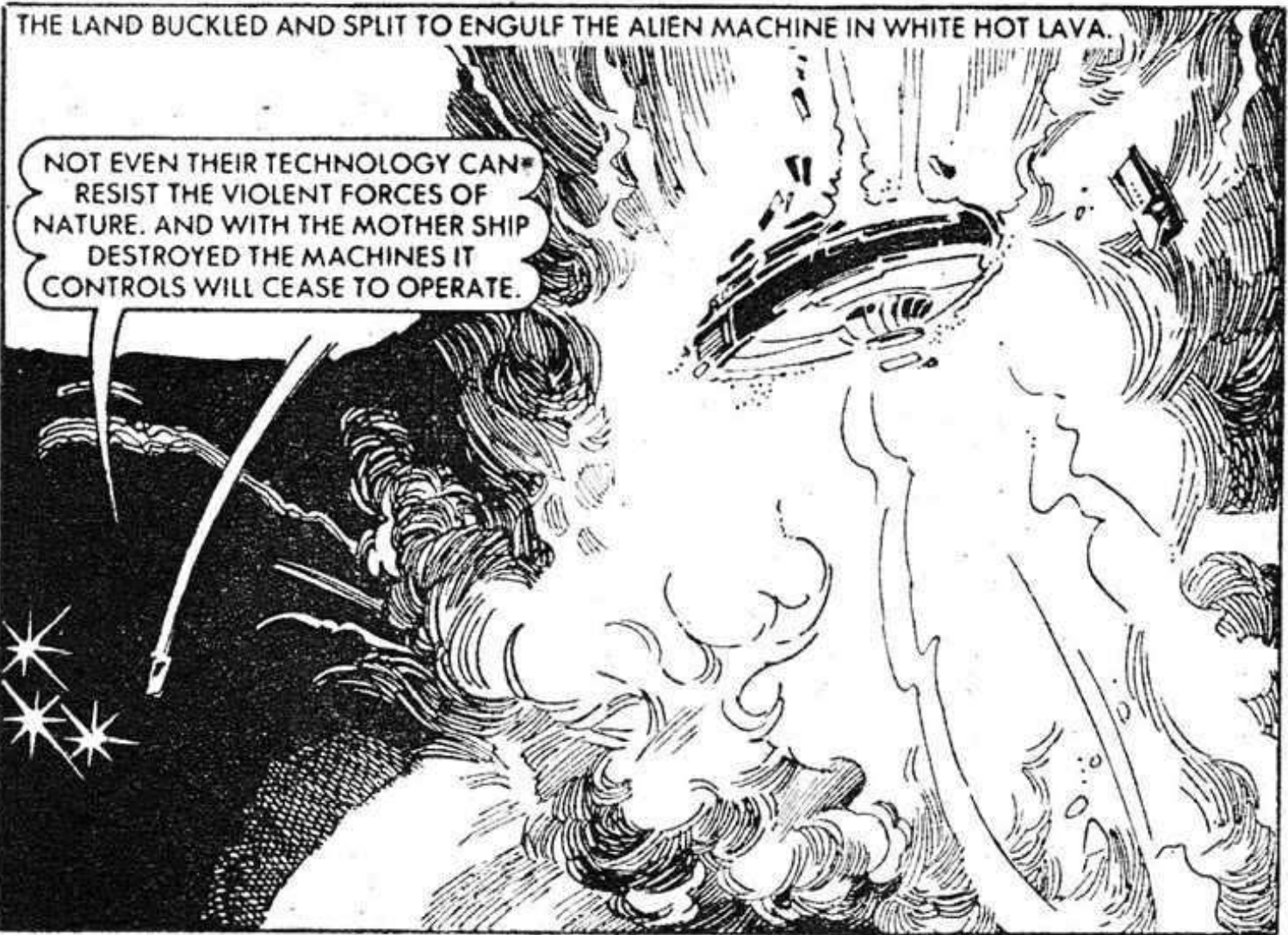




NOTHING WENT WRONG, STOBOR. THE CRAFT HAD NO APPARENT WEAKNESS, BUT THE GROUND BELOW IT HAS! LOOK!

GREAT SCOTT! OF COURSE, THE SAN ANDREAS FAULT, THE LINE OF GEOLOGICAL WEAKNESS RUNNING THROUGH THE CONTINENT.

THE LAND BUCKLED AND SPLIT TO ENGULF THE ALIEN MACHINE IN WHITE HOT LAVA.



NOT EVEN THEIR TECHNOLOGY CAN RESIST THE VIOLENT FORCES OF NATURE. AND WITH THE MOTHER SHIP DESTROYED THE MACHINES IT CONTROLS WILL CEASE TO OPERATE.

THE LIFECRAFT DITCHED WITH LAND IN SIGHT.

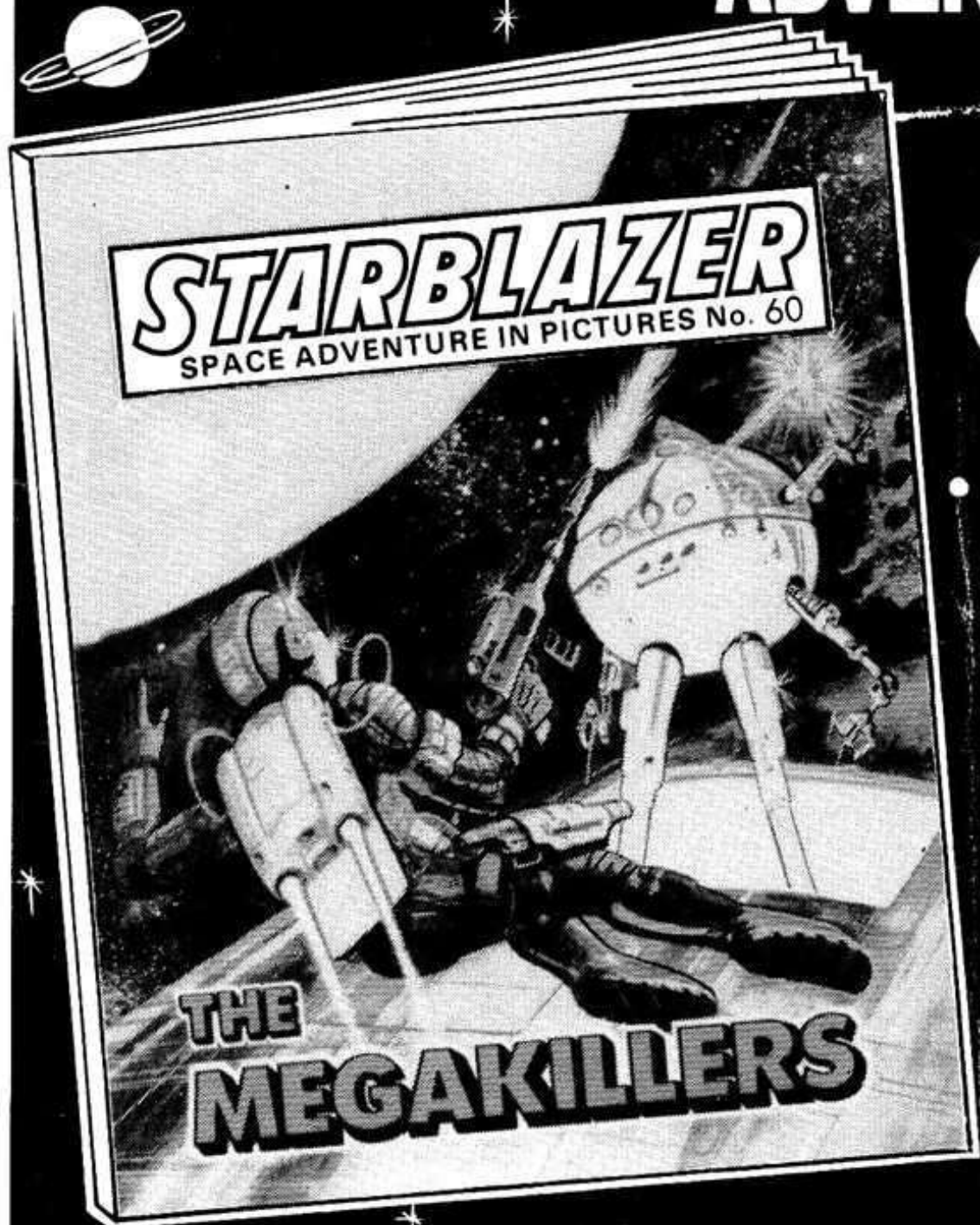
WE'RE SAFE! THERE MUST BE OTHER PEOPLE
IN REMOTE AREAS THAT ESCAPED THE
RADIATION.

THERE IS PLENTY FOOD HERE... WE CAN
LAST FOR A LONG TIME.

LONG ENOUGH TO MAKE
CONTACT WITH OUR OWN
WORLDS AND RE-ESTABLISH
EARTH AS A MAJOR FORCE
AGAIN.



DON'T MISS THIS MONTH'S OTHER ACTION-PACKED ADVENTURE



NOW ON SALE

STARBLAZERS EARTH SATELLITES 10

The European Space Agency's first weather satellite, Meteosat, launched in November 1977, is in a synchronous orbit over the Atlantic. It took this weather forecasting picture of Earth in 1979.

